





THE BLANK-BOOK

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Making a Poem

lie on the floor
I am butter
and melting fast.
your room is thick with magic sperm.
the breath comes —
brief expansion —
I am pregnant with a poem.
bad dreams I remember
ooze from my left breast,
little estuaries dripping from all my tips,
I have invented a panther
who will go for your throat
with one extra gesture
or I will purr
my stomach a magic vessel
stroke me! stroke me!
if I exhale
if I deflate
splinters of poems
will pierce you
knife-rain
or I could stand up and walk away.

Ellen Guinard

This Side

This side of the grave is where the anxiety occurs,
This side of the sandy, moist earth is where we kill,
This side of inhabiting a decaying coffin is where the fear will grip,
This side of being fertilizer for plants and trees is where we neglect the mother,
This side of green grass is where darkness scares us,
This side of an ant colony in the coffin is where we try to forget.
This side of living next to a groundhog is where we cut and slander and hurry on
unapologetically,
This side of resting the head on a rock is where we throw them,
This side of the grave is surely hell,
The next side is heaven,
Gotta be.

— Brian Bergwinkle

Confession

Clad in innocence,
the sun-laden girl
walks out of her ocean world
braving away from her father.

A vagabond virgin
seeking strangers
in a world of brown robed angels.

Scorned by hard breasted women
she sheads her covering
to sail the dark corners of her mind.

No longer bound by her ways.
Their ways.
Free to sing her lovesong.

Lynn Bergstrom
June, 1975

Blessed Be the Child

And the child was born.
The basement room surrounded in its entirety
with the everlasting fire
and the smell of celebration
was silent
as the slender dark haired woman moved
to her native dance,
no longer conscious
of the circle of painted faces
which were engulfing her
as she paid homage to the pagan god.
The dance and chanting continued for hours
while her sacrificial offering lay silently
upon the altar at one end of the room.
In the blackness of night,
 in total giving,
 the woman fell to the floor.
The child lives.
The ivory clad knife was removed from
the velvet chest
by the woman dressed in the black robe
and slowly, methodically,
it severed the vital flame of life.

Her painted mask has long ago been discarded
along with the native dance of her people.
All the cajolery of the ritual
has been lost.
And the child dies.

Lynn Bergstrom

Raspberries

Her face was expressionless
possessing a kind of silent knowing
as she stooped over
in the patch of greenery
picking raspberries.
It seemed that this
was all she did these days.
She raised her head
to catch a glimpse of the sun
fearing only a few more hours
of freedom.

Behind her stood a building of brick
with small, almost minute windows.
It was so distant from her world
and yet it was a part of her life now,
and there was no way to escape it.
She picked up her basket
filled with raspberries
and began to make her way to the kitchen
to clean them.

She would use that new knife
she had bought at the store the other day.
She found it so pleasing
to feel the red juices run down her arm
almost to the elbow.

The raspberry patch is overgrown
this spring
awaiting another of its silent loves.

Lynn Bergstrom

Jack

Remembering you is stolen, secret pleasure on a lonely night
If I don't ever speak of you and savor your memory seldom,
It remains a sweet hurt.

July is too hot — but not for love
On a night smelling of nature's incense
With the heavy darkness holding us in its heat.

I never hear crickets
Without feeling the loss of you,
Or smell freshly cut pine.
You were my carpenter — sun-kist and wind-brown
And I was your lady — high on the desire in your voice.

Popsicles are for summer — to make mouths watery-cool to kiss,
Music is to feel your breath on my neck.
A little time — very little — is to feel your hands touch my soul.

Remembering you is aching joy on a sultry night
Time improves its taste — like wine.

All Those Mornings After

On New Year's morning
our faceless footsteps whored the new snow.
Made drowsy by drink and the absence of sleep,
we watched a waterfull, bumpered gently
by its banks of ice and snow.
Braving the cold, we discovered
railroad tracks leading endlessly
through the woods. Walking
between the rails,
I found a single spike,
felt its rigid cold.
In my numbing fingers,
it was stiff and foreign.

Later —
we turned homeward
to place dull, padding steps
over aged hardwood floors.
In the stillness,
we hinged together,
wetting each others cheeks with cold tears.

Now —
I return to these two tracks,
walking on this side,
cold and alone.

Marijuana

mating	masters meet	medusa
	accumulated	ashes abort acceleration
	roadside	rainbows revive resolution
	independent	images inject immortality
	jumping jack	juveniles jellify jokery
	unicorns	urgently usurp unbelievers
	adventure	arouses armenian artists
	naked nuns	nibble nightingales
	and all	appreciate abstract afterthought

darlene abajian

Skiing in Fog

Solitude on diamond crystals
Shrouded by a sea-thick gray
and lonely cloud
hung low

no noise
Except the scrape of steel on ice
A moment coming

here and gone
The figure breaks the cloud

and fades

No sound preceded
No sound receded
Like God plunged down
To say,

"I DO EXIST"

Or was it just
Like the trees

illusion
that line the slope

The only sound
The dull and distant trumpling of the motors
Or is it a distant chariot
Carrying these gods to the summit of Olympus
To return to the valley below
To their cups of chocolate and brandy
but,

DON'T TOUCH DOPE

when skiing in fog
or you'll see God
on a collision course
with the endless up
and

down

And the drone

And the ice

Ice.

John F. Ryan

gina

for six years he weeps in the clutching hold
 of your loving arms
 your skinny body
 lies on his
 so he feels no pain
his thoughts naked to the green in your belly
your lips suck his blood until he's blinded
 in the red of it all
your eyes drill ditches
 thru the white of his skull
 you stare at the puss of his brains
as it crawls to breath the air you've extracted
 six years gina you beat
 the mere fulfillment of his last final wish
you whip the dreams he sleeps for you
you braid his mothers love thru the locks of your
 hair
 you crush the only woman he could
 never love
in the memory of you six years
 of his life

darlene abajian

gina twice

you hang gina
and cling with you teeth
to that last drop
which you worked so hard to set free

he has opened himself to you
spilled his every truth into you maternal womb
still you remain numb
to the explosion of his passion

he turns his back to your face
you fall to your knees
crawl to his feet
climbing his body
he reaches his hands to you
you stab holes in his flesh as you climb
clutching to his pity
his blood

seeps thru your pores
you wash yourself clean
from all guilt

he lies helpless on your floor
you caress him your tears
like ice
as they strike the softness of his belly

you cover his body with last weeks laundry you senses
numb to the odor of death

darlene abajian

I Feel

i feel like pine-bristles in
the last glare of descending
light;
a stroke, a tingle
of sun on each short dash of foliage;
the verdant depth of my nature
nearly obliterated
and splashed off by the impact
of white light —
each needle-leaf struck
and sprung separately.
and yet i
am the pine;
the sap and grey-brown scraggy bark,
and the rust-tinged roots
in the bitter soil,
the earth, air, sun rain —
i am all
of each of my green thrusts,
sun-sprung thrusts.
i feel the tinks and chimes of a thousand
mirrors rustling in the light of day,
the piercing stings and speckles
of sun-diamonds quivering their prisms;
i feel the blessing of showering
light
within the spheres that i am.

For Keith

Your crib can be a monkey's cage
Where you can scale the bars
Hang and swing, fall and laugh
Beneath the evening stars.

A carousel with colored lights
And hobby horses play
You ride and shout and catch the ring
Before the break of day.

A field of flowers all your own
A bed of daisy-white
Run and gather, toss on high
Until the early light.

A romping, loving, shaggy dog
Is always by your side
Tumbling kittens, furry-soft
To share the sleeping tide.

Drums and soldiers, big brass bands
Marching in your head
Elephants and circus clowns
Fill your tiny bed.

I watch my son in lovely sleep
His face in moonlight beams
I see his joy of living
As he spins his baby dreams.

Going In Circles

by Domenic Palmerino

"That was the number one song this week on the charts by 'Grand Funk' and it's the tenth week that it's been at the top of the list. The time is now six o'clock in the morning and for you listeners who are just getting up be sure that you dress cool today because the weatherman says it's gonna go up into the nineties by noontime. Ron Hayes is ready with the latest news developments, both locally and nationally, but don't go away because I'll be back in ten minutes with more great hits, past and present. Willie Townes for W.K.R.O. saying hang in there, be right back."

"Hang in there," that's a laugh Townes. Who do you think you're kidding anyway? You can't fool anyone, they got you pegged. You're a born loser and you know it. You work every weekday from eleven P.M. to seven A.M. on a radio show that pays you to keep the drunks awake until they can find their way home. Face it Townes, you're not good enough to work on daytime radio because you can't keep the audience tuned in. You don't have what it takes to work during the day. You're on your way out Willie. You have a wife that doesn't love you and would sleep with anyone who looked at her. You have two boys who treat you like shit and never do anything you tell them. Friends who don't talk to you anymore. A boss that's a queer. If it wasn't for the way he felt about you he would have fired you long before now. You haven't any money, they repossessed your car, you're a month behind on your rent. You need another bottle to get through the day but you haven't enough money to buy it. What a sap!

"That was Ron Hayes and he'll be back again at six thirty with more news here on W.K.R.O. radio, the station that keeps you up to date on all the latest happenings, all around the country, twenty-four hours a day. And now to take us back a few years with a song by the 'Beatles.' *Let It Be*.

Let it be and look where it gets you. You're a puppet Townes and everyone has a piece of the string. People are always taking advantage of you and using you. You're stupid to let it go on. Thirty-six years old and you haven't improved yourself one bit. Still a nighttime disc jockey making a hundred bucks a week, which goes straight to that bitch you married. People walk all over you, make fun of you and you don't do a thing about it. Let it be Townes and you're a goner.

There's your lousy boss over there smiling at you and thinking to himself only forty-five minutes left. He can't wait. He comes to get you before you're off the air to make sure you're on time. You can't even breathe without him being around. Just so you can keep this job and buy enough booze to keep you loaded. That's the only reason for this game and he knows it.

Wondering who your wife is sleeping with today? It's always someone different. She has quite a business going for herself. Two incomes supporting her, yours and hers. The slut. Someday you're going to kill that bitch with your bare hands right in the middle of one of her cheap thrills.

"Let It Be by the 'Beatles', number one a few years ago and still a big hit. Willie Townes here on W.K.R.O. bringing you all the hits, past and present, every weekday night from eleven at night to seven in the morning. If any of our listeners would like to request a song we would be glad to hear from you and get it on the air. Just call 755-6660 and tell us the song you'd like to hear. The time is now six-twenty in the morning, the temperature is forty-one degrees, looks like it is going to be a beautiful day today reaching into the nineties. Gentlemen dress cool and put on lots of deodorant. One more song now before the news, this one by the 'Carpenters', *We've Only Just Begun*."

Only just begun. Screw this place. Who are you fooling? No one. You're just playing a game. Going along with the rules. Don't make waves they say and everything will be fine. That's how it's always been, and how it'll always be. You're just a follower doing what everyone else says. Your boss, your wife, your kids. You can't even think for yourself. You can't get enough booze to keep you happy or enough money to buy a pack of cigarettes because the bitch takes all your money for herself and leaves you the stub from the check. No Willie it hasn't just begun for you. It may be just ending. You'd like that, right Willie, the easy way out. You've always taken the easy way out Willie, because you don't like the responsibility.

"The Carpenters', always at the top of the list. And now here with the news is Ron Hayes at six-thirty in the morning."

A half hour left and you'll be out of this dump. Don't you just hate this place? This job? This whole game? Why should you go on like this? There's no reason for it. You could end the whole thing right now by going over to the window, opening it and jumping. Ten stories, a long way to fall. Or maybe you should just walk outside as if nothing's wrong and fall in front of a truck. That sounds like the thing to do. Then tomorrow morning when your wife hears the news she'll get the details about how a radio disc jockey commits suicide after his radio broadcast. Townes, that's what you should do. End it now and make everyone happy, including yourself. End it before you go crazy and they put you

in some home. They'll never miss you Willie. In fact they may be happy that you're gone.

"Willie Townes back on W.K.R.O. radio. It is now twenty minutes before the hour of seven. For your listeners just leaving for work, have a good day and drive carefully. Be sure you watch out for the other guy and keep your eyes open for pedestrians. In ten minutes Jay O'Donnel will be taking over for me as I get ready for my long drive home. Now to close my broadcast here's 'Seals and Croft' with *We May Never Pass This Way Again*. Have a good day."

Willie Townes, you may never pass this way again, if you're lucky. There's that queer that you have for a boss going into his room. He's giving you ten minutes to rest after a night's work. Let's you freshen up in the men's room each morning before you go to his room. Well, you'll show him this time because you're not going to show up. And that wife of yours is going to be wondering when you'll be getting home to give her the money to go man hunting. Men's Room; there's a window in there. That's where to go.

Nobody around. Now's the time, before anyone comes in. Open the window. Climb on the ledge and jump. That's all Townes, do it, don't wait. Come on Townes, what's the matter, are you scared? Do it Willie, do it now, before it's too late.

"Good evening, Welcome to W.K.R.O. radio, the place to be. It is eleven ten and I am your happy D.J. Willie Townes bringing you all the hits, both past and present, the entire night. If you have any request you'd like to hear the number to call is 755-6660. Just tell me what you'd like and you got it. Now to start the evening, here is an oldie but goodie by 'Three Dog Night.' *Going In Circles*.

On Flying

Last weekend
Much to my surprise
I decided
Quite spontaneously to fly

There I was walking along
Rustling leaves
Climbing the trees
Exploring the intricacies
Of the ledge I'd found

Hey! Look over there!
A cave in the wall
Must belong to an animal
Ever so small
Think I'll go up
To see what I see.
You mean no one else
Is coming with me?

No fear of the mountain
I started to climb
Up toward that hole
To see what I could find.
I thought I'd step there
I thought that I should
Look at me — now I'm flying
Always knew that I could.

It's really a shame
I could only fly down
Think how nice it would be
To be flying around
Or how nice it would be
If I'd practiced the art
Of landing
Before I decided to start.

John F. Ryan

To A Vanquished Friend

To cease being wild and free, greying brother hawk,
What was it you received?
It must have been something very dear to you —
Life?
You forfeited so much when you organized,
relinquished your unkemptness, your barely controlled ferocity.

Now you are only a quail with clipped pinfeathers,
Kept gamebird, out of danger
You can no longer fly in freedom
And you can no longer guide others to the heights.

Donna Gilmore Leary
Class of '76

Sharon Messinger

I had wanted to write a letter to explain those times of disillusioned reactions and mock amusement, but not until today did I feel this strong desire. It's been three years since I saw you — a lonely, apathetic three years of staring into bowls of chicken noodle soup, and ordering magazines which never come. I've missed those days of sunshine and bright stars. All that is left is mud-trudged snow and little dippers who don't care to pattern themselves after dad.

My first year without you was difficult. I remember the day you left — I felt like the poor little match girl, without her matches. One soon learns that life goes on — indeed it does. I've moved, you know. No, you don't know, how could you? But I have. I've moved, but am still at the same job. I've been promoted and I'm taking night courses in newspaper management, but I don't know what will ever come of it. I'm sorry — I'm rambling. I know how much you hate my rambling, but it's either that or tear this letter up. I want you to know — it was nobody's fault — nobody's. Nothing is forgotten, but almost all is forgiven.

I'd like to know what you're doing, where you're going and why. Your existence is so dream-like to me, and my nightmares always revolve around any atrocities which might have happened to you because of my vanity and your pride. I'm not asking you to write, just remember the good times. The good times, damn it.

Eight months ago I got married to a horticulturist. We have a green house on our premises. I did tell you I had moved! His name is Greg and we're living happily ever after — from 12:00 A.M. to 8:00 A.M. In between we have our marital disagreements, nothing serious. We always nip it in the bud — just a little horticulturist humor. I hope this doesn't come as a shock to you, but I needed a life to share, and my cat died, so... what was I to do? I should be going. The dust on the coffee table beckons me and my coffee pot needs refilling. Think of me.

Love,
Mom

The Pines, In Winter

dead souls go there first
for shelter
wouldn't you?

fir trees should relent
a little
all that weight

forests of boredom
think of it
all the same

three in our backyard
three pine trees
under snow

they say if you squeeze
a fir tree
in winter

if you drink fir juice
you will live
forever

I don't know. last night
I listened
for dead souls

they must have been warned
I don't know.
I just heard

creaking of pine trees
under snow.

Ellen Guinard

William Dauenhauer
5394 Nan Linn Drive
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The English Professor (Alone)

Books in rows, too dull
for perusal;
modern King Lear is surrounded
with memory-things.
Polished smooth desk, reflects like
mirror
Shakespeare's staring gaze,
Joseph Addison neatly framed
in the hard oak of Nottingham.

Life (he feels) has been
good to him.

There were tender girls, in their season,
and laughing comrades
ranging through lusty nights
& apathetic days —
there were tasks to do, tricks
to perform,
& seditious youth was
quite soon made docile.

He's alone;
alone — as always — with his books;
surrounded — as always — with youth's debris:
manuscripts & themes close round about
while he nods, eyes closed, on the brink of sleep.

Resolution

I promised to give up
lines of old, grey horses long ago —
old friends,
clubbing memories of lost races —
but images of tattered ribbons haunt me.
As a storm rider on an ancient track
seeing the old regime there,
i go on without end...
Grey horses, stinking stables —
rusting trophies.
Still hopeful, Time, the herald,
sings the new folds into this moment,
creating life.
The abrupt knowledge that the last few races
may have been called
was gleaned from a mechanical broadcast,
yet faith echoes inside my head;
it sires fresh hope for the riders
and a dawning light.

Donna Gilmore Leary
Class of '76

The Dion Patrol

Thomas Dion checked the olive green pouch that was slung over his left shoulder. He glanced at the time clock that was mounted on the wall to his left. The little red numbers in its upper right corner told him that he still had four minutes before he could leave the office building. If he punched out now, he would be docked fifteen minutes.

Screw, he said to himself. He took his employee-ident card and rammed it into the time clock's slot. There was a loud click and a small green light flashed. The machine had recorded his departure.

He stood in the hallway, facing the rear steps of the building. He double checked his green sack once more. There was enough light for him to see what he was doing. Besides, if he forgot anything that should be in the sack, he would be able to go back and get it.

Dion took out a fist sized blue and white cannister marked "Stopit". He shook the can. He judged the weight to be about three quarters full. He used the red plastic clip to fasten this object to the inner cleat of the sack. Stopit was a chemical repellent made to stop both men and animals. The chemical irritants in the contents would blind any man or large animal for at least an hour. The repellent was securely attached. All he had to do was reach for it . . . if he had to use it.

Inside the bag was a rolled and folded section of plastic. Careful examination of the plastic would show that one side of the thing had razor blades imbedded in it. The blades were on the upper part of the plastic. A quick swipe could open a man's scalp in two or three places. The bladeless side could be used to knock out teeth or break fingers.

Thomas Dion found his eye glass case. He took out the case and placed his glasses on as he went down the stairs. They would help his myopic vision.

He glanced up at the sky. The night was breezeless. The full moon was a blind unblinking orb in the sky.

"Damn it," he said to himself, "the crazies must be out in full force tonight." He crossed the parking lot, waving to the few armed guards on duty. He envied the guards as much as he did the people who owned cars.

Long gone were the days of hiring retired factory workers as security guards. The guards that were being hired were young and strong. Equal matches for the young studs who might want to torch a car as a means of passing away a quiet evening.

The jurisdiction of the guards only extended to the large office buildings and the grounds. Once Thomas Dion stepped outside of the parking lot area, he was alone.

He turned left and went up the hill. Survival instincts came alive quickly. His ears were ready to identify every sound, to evaluate whether it would be friend or foe. . . His eyes scanned the streets fast.

The few remaining stores in the area were closed. The dirty brownstone buildings were dimly lit.

A car passed him on its way up the hill. The head lights of the small car illuminated the area ahead of him. Dion crossed a small street, then walked around a row of parked cars that lined the block.

To his left, on the sidewalk were a row of hedges that lined most of the block. The hedges were at least four feet high. Perfect lair for a robber. To Dion's right was a small school and an unlit park. An attack could come from either direction. If he had to fight off an attack, it would be best to have room to move. The open street was no safety zone, but it was better than being cornered.

Dion remembered when just women had to worry about rape, but the violence thing had reached its zenith. Young, agile, violence oriented thugs would go after anyone.

The idea of being sodomized by some grubby bastards sickened and angered Thomas Dion. He was too old to expand his sexual encounters. Jesus, a man's ass is inviolate.

As he passed the last parked car, the lone walker stopped to catch his breath. The laws, the damn laws were so stupid. A decent working man couldn't carry a gun, club or knife to protect himself. The crazies had everything but lasers at their disposal.

Lord help him if he used the razors. It would have to be hit and run. The law would have his ass in an air tight sling. They would charge him with carrying a concealed weapon and try to prove that he was itching for a fight. The mace was legal. Even the mailmen carried a can or two on them during their rounds.

On the next block was a small construction site. Dion knew there were mounds of sand and gravel in the dark back ground. Once again, he stayed in the street, walking outside the cars that were parked up the block.

A couple of months ago, a young boy from St. Mary's High School had been jumped by a pack of crazies. The boy was simply coming home from a basketball game. He was dragged behind the wooden outhouse, where he was raped, beaten to a pulp and left nude in a sand pile. According to his neighbors, the construction workers found the boy the next morning.

Dion patted his mace can. One false move and he would blind them. There was no sign of life from the darkness in the site.

The worried man slowed down as he turned the corner. He stepped into the street and waited. Night vision took a little more time to go into effect. In a few minutes, he would be able to discern objects in the darkness. He took out his mace can and placed his finger on the white button. He walked fast.

Mastif Country! On both sides of the street were two family houses. The sidewalks were lined with parked cars. Some of the houses had cyclone mesh fences about them, while others only had hedges. It was a bit less than five minutes from the corner to his house, but all hell could break loose between that time.

Within the two block range of his apartment, there were two or three street lights and at least nine dogs. Five of the nine dogs were attack dogs. The dogs were young, large, and trained to bite first and bark later.

If attacked, the razor club could open a dog's throat, but it could mean facing a law suit if he were caught. The best bet was to use the mace and run like hell.

The leash laws were enforced, but there was always the chance that one of the hundred pound dogs could snap his leash with a single, excited leap and come after him.

It was less than a block to Dion's apartment. It would do him no good to change jobs because the situation was everywhere. It was worse in the cities. Police chased vigilantes, vigilantes chased the crazies, crazies chased their victims. He wished over and over that he had taken the time to learn how to drive. He should have done it when he was younger; cars were cheaper in those days. Now, he could only afford to take a cab when the weather was bad. Dion also knew that even if he did own a car, it would possibly be stolen.

Thomas Dion stepped out of the darkness. He dropped the mace can back in the pouch. He looked at the large street lights and sighed. In less than a minute, he would be home.

Quietly, the tired man climbed the wooden stairs to the front door. He shook his head. Damn, it was only Monday. Four more days to go and he would have the weekend off. Maybe he would ask Lois for a date. No, take her camping. Anything to get away from the suburban jungle and all its barbarians.

Dion stood in front of his door and reached in his left pants pocket for his keys. Change, breath mints, no keys. He patted his right pocket — nothing. Dion quickly opened his pouch and shoved his hand inside. A sting of pain arced across his thumb. He gingerly retracted his hand. The keys were not on him at all.

Grimly, he looked into the darkness beyond the street lights. His mind raced. He didn't remember dropping the keys. No, he didn't even stumble or trip.

He looked at the front door. There was no doorbell and beating and yelling outside the door might be ignored for a while. Even so, he wouldn't want to wake anyone up. There might be a time when he really needed help and . . . shit!

The keys were either in the office or in his locker. Most likely in the office. Thomas Dion looked towards the darkness that seemed to infringe on the perimeter of the street lights. He slowly walked down the wooden stairs. Five minutes down and five minutes back up. He glanced down at his bleeding thumb. Fresh air would help the blood clot. He carefully reached into the bag with his other hand and took out the can of mace. He slung the sack over his shoulder and held the mace by his side.

Ready or not, dammit, ready or not.

Five minutes down and five minutes back up.

In the distance he heard a dog bark. His thumb was sticky with his own blood. Thomas Dion began to perspire as he approached the maw of the dark street.

The End

— Matar

The Opening of a Door

"Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room"

We are all lillies of the field
Weeds or wild flowers
Running through this life
Unseen for all our beauty
By all but those who love us
And they
The ones who pluck us from our stems
That we may die an early death
In strange surroundings
A smoke-filled room
An alter — cold with golden metal
Above — an idol agonizes on a plaster cross
Below — the box is wheeled up the nylon steps
Of man's sacred, sacrificial platform
The words ring hollow through the vacant stares
 God did not forsake him
 God fulfilled him
 As the pellets
 From the shotgun
 Filled his head
He is God's plucked lilly.

John F. Ryan







